

Re: Whittier, Alaska

Presbytery of Yukon

IN ALASKA

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U. S. A.

May 18, 1945

MAY 23 1945

Julian

Rev. E. Jackman
Unit of Work in Alaska
Board of National Missions
156 Fifth Avenue
New York 10, New York

Dear Earle:

Last Tuesday and Wednesday Victor Alfson and myself were guests of George Morgan, Director of the work of Columbia Lumber at Whittier, Alaska.

We took this as the opportunity to follow the directive of the Presbytery of Yukon seeking to investigate the status of activity at that spot.

We wish to report the following: There will be about thirty (30) family units when the project is complete. Some twenty (20) children will be at this point. It is expected from confersations with Mr. James Ryan, Commissioner of Schools that they will have a teacher at Whittier if the company provides the building. The territory will pay the salary and furnish books. Including the camps there will be some 129 men involved in the total project.

The station master at Whittier told me that the soldiers will be pulling out of there in the next two months. This will leave a civilian crew. There are already a number of men stationed there and some women.

Because we found that there had been no service at this point during the last twelve (12) months we have scheduled a meeting for May 22 and June 19. Other services will be planned. It is pprobable that by July 4 there will be a number of children here and housing can be provided if the company knows in advance of the Board plans to place a worker here.

Other plans than the above indicated will be best cleared through the contacts already developed through the office. Again, anytime after the 4th of July will be fine.

Respectfully submitted,

Rolland
Rolland Armstrong
Victor Alfson

Copy:
Jackman
Morgan, Geo.
Alfson
Champlin
File, Presbytery

JUN 14 1945

MEMORANDUM

June 12, 1945

File

TO: Dr. Jackman
FROM: Mr. Foster
RE: Whittier, Alaska

We are making a grant from the War-time Service Fund for a civilian chaplain who will be assigned to the war industry field at Whittier, Alaska. This grant will be in an amount up to \$900 for a period of one year from the date on which the worker begins his service.

It is our understanding that the balance of the budget for this work is to be cared for through the Unit of Work in Alaska.

see 6/15/45 letter to Ray Downes - Alaska applicant

Don Foster
Thomas B. Foster, Jr.

TBF:pv
cc: Dr. Dawber

First Presbyterian Church

ALASKA
PERM. FILE

October 11, 1945
Anchorage, Alaska

Dr. Earl Jackman,
156 Fifth Avenue
New York 10, N.Y.

Subject: Whittier; Request for permission from
Home Mission Council

Dear Earl,

Today, Bert Bingle and I inquired about the future of Whittier. From all reports this port will be opened for civilian housing sometime in 1946 or 47. Civilian workers will be housed in present army quarters.

The manager of the Alaska Railroad, Colonel O. F. Ohlson has been approached on the location of church property at the new Whittier townsite. The location for churches has been selected and when the townsite has opened, these lots will be for sale on bids. Col. Ohlson is interested in the history of Presbyterian work in this new development.

To refresh our minds, it is well to recall that Mr. Bingle held services in the first construction camp at the west portal of the Whittier tunnel. Even before tracks were laid through the tunnel, Mr. Bingle walked the distance of some four miles to hold services in the eastern portal. When Mr. Bingle was assigned to war time service he requested that I continue services at the West Construction Company camp. These services were continued until the abandonment of this

Whittier,
ALASKA
PERM. FILE

page 2

civilian construction crew. Some services were also held by the Rev. David Crawford, an associate of Mr. Bingle's.

You will remember it was the decision of the Presbytery that Mr. Alfson and I investigate the Whittier situation in view of your report from Tom Morgan of Columbia Lumber Co. We found the camp without services and for the past months have been alternating our work to be there every two weeks.

According to Col. Ohlson, our first procedure to acquire our rights in the opening of the townsite and the present army chapel will be for him to receive a written statement from the Home Mission Council that our church has complete authorization to act in their behalf. Please note that this authorization should be placed in the hands of Col. Ohlson, Anchorage, Alaska and a copy to be filed with us. I have made mention of the army chapel. This building will be available until other provisions are made. Although in a sense, not a regular chapel, it will adequately serve our needs during the period of construction of the town of Whittier,

Faithfully yours,

Rolland Armstrong

RRA/d

ALASKA
PERM. FILE

Whittier
HOME MISSIONS COUNCIL OF NORTH AMERICA, Inc.
297 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 10, N. Y.

OCT 30 1945

Executive Secretaries:

October 29, 1945

EDITH E. LOWRY

MARK A. DAWBER

The Reverend J. Earl Jackman
156 Fifth Avenue
New York 10, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Jackman:

Dr. Dawber has written Col. O. F. Ohlson assuring him
that Whittier is assigned to the Presbyterian Board of National Missions.
We hope that you will receive his cooperation in securing a chapel for the
work there.

Yours very truly,

HOME MISSIONS COUNCIL OF NORTH AMERICA

Merle Gripman

*11/9/45 Dr. Dawber wrote
me about this above
cc to Mr. Alfken*

DEC 5 1945

Whittier
ALASKA
PERM. FILE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

The Alaska Railroad

Anchorage, Alaska
November 19, 1945

Air Mail

Mr. Mark A. Dawber, Executive Secretary
Home Missions Council of North America
297 Fourth Avenue
New York 10, New York

Dear Mr. Dawber:

Your letter of October 29 advising that the Whittier field in Alaska is assigned to the Presbyterian Board of National Missions has been received.

As you may know, the port of Whittier is used only for the movement of military cargo and personnel. Commercial passengers and freight are routed through the port of Seward and will continue to be so handled for at least two and one-half years. Up to the present time the United States Army has been operating the port of Whittier and only military personnel have resided there. Naturally church services for them have been conducted by Army chaplains.

It has, however, now been decided that The Alaska Railroad will take over the operation of the Whittier port on December fifth of this year, at which time the Army will withdraw its port battalion forces and turn over to the Department of the Interior their water system, sewage system, power plant, and all of their warehouses, barracks type buildings used by soldiers and officers, et cetera. The Alaska Railroad will station at Whittier only about two hundred fifty men which number will be sufficient to continue operation of the port for military cargo and it is not contemplated that any families or women will make their homes there for the present. It is probable that an additional one hundred men will be stationed at Whittier within a year.

Eventually, probably within about two and one-half years, commercial traffic will be handled through Whittier. At that time it is anticipated that there will be a population of about 650 at Whittier, including railroad personnel, families and business people. When this change takes place all of the present buildings constructed by the Army must be torn down and the real building of the town of Whittier will begin. The townsite area has already been laid out and streets and alleys planned, also zoning regulations which stipulate what areas will be available for residential, business and municipal purposes. The lots in the townsite area will be put up for bid and sold to private individuals, churches, businesses or other groups who plan to build at that point.

Thought best to give you these facts before discussing a chapel building. Among the buildings which the Army will turn over next month to The Alaska Railroad is a chapel, formerly used as a church by the Army, which incidentally is fully equipped. The Alaska Railroad will, if desired, make this chapel available to the Presbyterian Board of National Missions rent free but it will be necessary for your Board to pay for utility service--heat, light, etc. Such services can be furnished

Dr. Mark A. Dawber

-2-

November 19, 1945

at cost, however, by the Railroad until such time as it is planned to route all traffic through Whittier. This chapel is one of the buildings constructed by the Army which will have to be torn down when that change occurs and lots in the town-site are made available for purchase, but for the next two years or so it would undoubtedly serve your needs very well.

I would suggest that you let me know your wishes in this matter by air mail.

Sincerely,

(Signed) O. F. Ohlson
General Manager

President
HERMANN N. MORSE

First Vice-President
MRS. J. D. BRAGG

Second Vice-President
WILLARD M. WICKIZER

Recording Secretary
MRS. C. S. SMITH

Treasurer
EDNA R. HOWE

DEC 5 1945

HOME MISSIONS COUNCIL OF NORTH AMERICA

THE INTERCHURCH AGENCY OF HOME MISSIONS BOARDS AND SOCIETIES OF TWENTY-THREE DENOMINATIONS

CONSTITUENT BODIES

NATIONAL BAPTIST
NORTHERN BAPTIST
CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
CHURCH OF GOD
CONGREGATIONAL-CHRISTIAN

DISCIPLES OF CHRIST
PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL
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EVANGELICAL AND REFORMED
FRIENDS
UNITED LUTHERAN
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL

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COLORED METHODIST EPISCOPAL
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PRESBYTERIAN, U.S.
UNITED PRESBYTERIAN OF NORTH AMERICA

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UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST
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AMERICAN SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION

297 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 10, N. Y.
TELEPHONE GRAMERCY 5-4658

Executive Secretaries
EDITH E. LOWRY
MARK A. DAWBER

COPY

Whittier
**ALASKA
PERM. FILE**

November 27, 1945
Air Mail

Mr. O. F. Ohlson
Alaska Railroad
Anchorage, Alaska

Dear Mr. Ohlson:

We appreciate very much the information relative to the situation at Whittier, but we would thank you to make the arrangements necessary for the use of this chapel to be released by the Alaska Railroad, and assure you that the other necessary expenses to cover service, heat, light, etc. will be met by the Presbyterian Board of National Missions.

Thanking you very much for this service, I am

Yours very cordially,

MARK A. DAWBER

Whittier Folder
Dr. Morse
Dr. Jackman

November 28, 1945

In consideration of the action of the Advisory Committee on Missionary Operation at its meeting on Wednesday, November 28th, we are asking you to present to the Board through the Administrative Council the approval of a minister for a new project at Whittier, Alaska at a base salary of \$2400. a year and an allowance of \$200. additional in our travel budget which would cover his transportation to the field.

JEJ:FK

J. Earl Jackman, Secretary
Unit of Work in Alaska

Excerpt from November 30, 1945 Minutes of the Board Meeting:

- "b) The Advisory Committee considered various opportunities for new work resulting from developments during the war. In the judgment of the Secretary of the Alaska Unit the most important new demand is for the appointment of a missionary to serve at Whittier, Alaska. The initial expense for salary and travel is estimated at \$2600. for a full year. A partial provision has been made under the War-Time Service budget. The Advisory Committee recommends that the Department of Missionary Operation be authorized to make a commitment of the additional amount needed for this purpose under the supplemental budget, to being as soon as a suitable man for this work can be found.

This was VOTED. "

Handwritten: ALASKA
PERM. FILE

First Presbyterian Church

December 4, 1945

Dr. Earl Jackman
156 Fifth Avenue
New York 10, N.Y.

Dear Earl:

After receiving a note from the office to the General manager of the Alaska Railroad I sent him word saying I would be glad to help in any way.

In return he invited me to talk over the situation and enclosed a copy of his letter to Dr. Dawber. I suppose you have it but have made duplicates. ~~It~~ I am sending one to Champlin as Chairman of National Missions, Alfsen as co-worker on the Whittier project.

Let me know what we can do. I suppose in the light of Ohlson's offer that direct word from the office is most desirable. Note that he asked for word from Dawber by air mail.

We are well. Thanks for being behind us in our work.

Most sincerely

see Whittier folder
ALASKA
PERM. FILE

Board of National Missions
of the Presbyterian Church in the
United States of America

156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

December 27, 1945

Whittier
ALASKA
PERM. FILE

VIA AIRMAIL

Col. C. F. Ohlson,
General Manager
The Alaska Railroad
Anchorage, Alaska

My dear Col. Ohlson:

C We have been in communication with The Rev. R. Rolland Armstrong of Anchorage and Dr. Mark Dawber of the Home Missions Council in regard to the development at Whittier. Both have sent us copies of your letter to Dr. Dawber concerning the proposed development.

Inasmuch as our missionaries have been holding services in the Whittier area for some time and now the Home Missions Council has allocated Whittier to the Presbyterians as our territory, we appreciate very much your offer of cooperation in the form of the use of the army chapel which is in Whittier and the information which you have given us concerning the program of developments.

We are making an effort to develop a program of better church service for the area. Our Board has authorized us to find a young minister who might go into that section and give the major part of his time to Whittier. Because of the rugged living conditions there at this early date, we are seeking a single man who could lay the foundations for a stronger community program at a later time. We have been unable to find such a man as yet but have two or three prospects. Meanwhile, we are asking our ministers on the field to go down to Whittier as frequently as possible to have spiritual services for the people who are already there. **P** **Y**

We shall keep you informed about our developments either through Mr. Armstrong in Anchorage or directly from this office. Thank you again for your cooperation.

Cordially yours,

J. Earl Jackman, Secretary
Unit of Work in Alaska

JES:FK

Address only
The Alaska Railroad

C O P Y

AUG 28 1946

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
THE ALASKA RAILROAD

AIR MAIL

Anchorage, Alaska
August 21, 1946

(rec. Aug 26, 1946)

Mr. Mark A. Dawber, Executive Secretary
Home Missions Council of North America
297 Fourth Avenue
New York 10, New York

Dear Mr. Dawber:

Reference is made to letter dated November 19, 1945, from O. F. Ohlson, General Manager of The Alaska Railroad, in which was discussed the matter of the port of Whittier, Alaska, and the use by the Presbyterian Board of National Missions, the chapel which was constructed by the Army on the Whittier Townsite.

Early in the year it was decided to discontinue the operation of the Whittier port by persons of The Alaska Railroad, and all activities there were removed to the port of Seward. At the present time the only operations being carried on at Whittier are those of the Columbia Lumber Company, and two contractors setting up steel tanks for oil storage.

Last winter a large number of the buildings in the townsite collapsed due to the weight of snow, and now it has been decided to remove all these buildings from the area except those that are absolutely needed for future use by the Railroad should emergency operation of the port be necessary.

In view of the foregoing, I wonder if you are still interested in using this building. If not, we will arrange to remove it along with other buildings in the same area.

Very sincerely,

(Signed) J. P. Johnson
General Manager

Whittier Side
ALASKA
PERM. FILE

September 5, 1946

VIA AIRMAIL

Mr. J. P. Johnson,
General Manager
The Alaska Railroad
Anchorage, Alaska

Dear Mr. Johnson:

Your letter of August 21st to Dr. Mark A. Dawber, Executive Secretary of the Home Missions Council in regard to the chapel at Whittier has been referred to me because of our interest in that building. We appreciate your courtesy in reporting this matter to us before any action was taken in regard to the removal of the building.

The Home Missions Council has allocated the town of Whittier to the Presbyterians for Christian ministry in the future. Our ministers in that area have been taking turns holding services there as long as the port was open, and we were seeking a permanent minister for that field. The report came to us that the port was closed so we have temporarily abandoned the effort to seek a minister. Now we understand that it may be opened in the near future and we are hoping to find someone who will serve Whittier possibly from Anchorage at the start.

We are very much interested in having the chapel remain in Whittier so that we will have a sanctuary from which we can minister to the people. In fact, we have been hoping that when the town is built it might be possible for us to procure the chapel and move it to a permanent site. I have not seen it but most of the army chapels have enough permanence to last for several years or until a more permanent structure could be built for a congregation of people in the town. At present, we are interested in having the chapel remain in the hope of using it when the port is opened and the town is built.

Sincerely yours,

J. Earl Jackson, Secretary
Unit of Work in Alaska

JEB:FE

CC: Dr. Mark A. Dawber, New York City and The Rev. R. Rolland Armstrong,
Anchorage, Alaska

SEP 13 1946

ADDRESS ONLY
THE ALASKA RAILROAD

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
THE ALASKA RAILROAD

Anchorage, Alaska
September 10, 1946

Whittier sub

Mr. J. Earl Jackman, Secretary
Unit of Work in Alaska
Board of National Missions of the
Presbyterian Church
156 Fifth Avenue
New York 10, N. Y.

My dear Mr. Jackman:

Replying to your letter of September 5, regarding the chapel which was constructed by the Army on the Whittier Townsite.

This is to advise that the Army is returning to Whittier and has requested that they retain this chapel; also, the chapel is located in that part of Whittier which during the coming winter will not be kept free from snow, and cannot be used by either the Army or other parties. To date no definite plans have been set forth regarding the town of Whittier.

Very sincerely,

J. T. Cunningham
J. T. Cunningham
Acting General Manager